

---

# Burning Buildings: What Firefighters Need to Know

## Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

---

Some buildings may be burned for practice and instruction of fire fighters or for testing fire fighting equipment, provided the following procedures are followed:

- The fire district, fire department or building owner must submit a demolition notification to the DNR Air Management Program and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.
- The DNR Air Management Program recommends that asphalt shingles and siding be removed from any building to be burned, unless they are needed for a realistic fire practice or it would be unsafe to remove them. However, if the shingles or siding contain *asbestos*, they *must* be removed prior to burning the building or an alternate method of demolition must be chosen.
- All asbestos-containing materials (e.g. ceiling tiles, floor tiles, insulation, etc.) must be removed because of the health hazards that could result from burning them. **Asbestos is a known human carcinogen.**
- An individual who owns a building that has been burned for fire practice must dispose of cold ash and unburned material at a licensed landfill. However, exempt materials--such as brick, cement, concrete, building stone, and unpainted, untreated wood--may be disposed of at the building site if it is not in a wetland or critical habitat or on a floodplain, as noted in section NR 500.08(2):

Other Facilities. The following facilities must be established in conformance with the locational requirements of s. NR 504.04 (3) (c) and (4) (a) to (e) and must be operated and maintained in a nuisance-free and aesthetic manner but are exempt from licensing and the requirements of chs. NR 500 to 522.

(a) Facilities where only clean soil, brick, building stone, concrete, reinforced concrete, broken pavement, and unpainted or untreated wood are disposed.

(b) Facilities for the exclusive disposal of spoils from sand, gravel or stone and crushed stone quarry operations and similar nonmetallic earth materials.

(c) Facilities for the disposal of wood residue from a saw mill, debarker or equivalent industry which produces less than 5,000 board feet of lumber per year or equivalent and the total disposal facility volume is less than 500 cubic yards of wood residue.

- Cold ash and unburned material from a burned building that previously was used as a business or non-private residence must be disposed of at a licensed landfill. Clean wood, brick, and block may be disposed of at a demolition landfill, which requires approval from the DNR Solid Waste Program.

For more information, contact the DNR Solid Waste Program staff in your district or area office.

